

REMARKS

This Response is submitted in reply to the Office Action dated April 27, 2007, in which the Examiner rejected claims 1-13 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 3,875,481 to Miller et al., in view of WIPO Publication WO 02/37660 A1 ("Benslimane") and U.S. Patent No. 4,549,093 to Severwright.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections below. Claims 1-13 are currently pending. Claims 1 and 11, directed to a tactile sensor element and array, respectively, are independent claims.

Claims 1 and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Miller in view of Benslimane and Severwright. A rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is improper unless the Examiner establishes a prima facie case of obviousness. See MPEP 2142. A prima facie case of obviousness is not established where the reference teachings, alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest each and every claim recitation. See MPEP 2143.03.

Applicants' claim 1 recites, in part, a tactile sensor element comprising an elastomeric body arranged between first and second pressure transfer layers, the body having a first surface and a second surface opposed to each other, the first and second surfaces having corrugations, and a first electrode arranged on the first surface and a second electrode arranged on the second surface, wherein at least one pressure transfer layer has at least one portion of increased thickness. Applicants' claim 11 is directed to a tactile sensor array comprising, in part, a plurality of sensor elements, and includes similar recitations to those discussed in connection with claim 1.

Miller does not teach or suggest each and every claim 1 or 11 recitation. For example, Miller does not teach or suggest an elastomeric body having opposed first and second surfaces with corrugations, and first and second electrodes arranged on the respective first and second surfaces. Instead, Miller teaches an arrangement in which dielectric, elastomeric, compliant layers 14 and 15 *each* have a single ribbed surface, the ribbed surfaces sandwiching a centrally-located conductive layer 13.

Additionally, Miller does not teach or suggest that an elastomeric body with electrodes on opposed first and second surfaces is located between first and second pressure transfer layers, as recited by Applicants' claims 1 and 11. For instance, Miller's dielectric, elastomeric, compliant layer 14 is sandwiched between conductive layers 11 and 13. Similarly, Miller's dielectric, elastomeric, compliant layer 15 is sandwiched between conductive layers 12 and 13. Miller does not teach or suggest any pressure transfer layer above the conductive layer 11 or below the conductive layer 13.

Furthermore, Miller does not teach or suggest that at least one pressure transfer layer has at least one portion of increased thickness, as recited by Applicants' claims 1 and 11. Even if Miller's conductive layers 11 or 12 were considered to be both electrodes *and* pressure transfer layers, Miller does not teach or suggest that either one of the layers 11 or 12 has a portion of increased thickness.

Benslimane does not add to the teachings of Miller, at least in that Benslimane also does not teach or suggest first and second pressure transfer layers arranged around its elastomeric body 2. Since Benslimane does not teach or suggest pressure transfer layers, it certainly does not teach or suggest a pressure transfer layer having at least one portion of increased thickness.

Severwright does not add to the teachings of Miller and Benslimane, in that Severwright also does not teach or suggest first and second pressure transfer layers arranged around an elastomeric body 2. Since Severwright does not teach or suggest pressure transfer layers, it certainly does not teach or suggest a pressure transfer layer having at least one portion of increased thickness. Also, Severwright is directed to a *conductive* pressure sensor, sensing pressure based on *electrical contact* between conductors (see, e.g., Severwright, col. 3, lines 39-48). Thus, Severwright is non-analogous to the present application, and not properly cited in a § 103 rejection. (See MPEP 2141.01(a).)

Therefore, neither Miller nor Benslimane nor Severwright, nor the combination thereof, teaches or suggests each and every recitation of Applicants' claims 1 and 11. Thus, a prima facie case of obviousness has not been established for claims 1 and 11. Additionally, as noted above, at least Severwright is non-analogous

art, and is not properly used in support of a claim rejection under § 103. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of claims 1 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Miller in view of Benslimane and Severwright is improper for at least these reasons, and should be withdrawn.

Claims 2-10, 12 and 13 were also rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Miller in view of Benslimane and Severwright. These claims all depend, directly or indirectly, from claim 1 or claim 11, and include additional recitations thereto. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of claims 2-10, 12 and 13 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Miller in view of Benslimane and Severwright is improper for at least the reasons stated in connection with claims 1 and 11, and should be withdrawn.

Having traversed each and every claim rejection, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 1-13 be withdrawn, and claims 1-13 be passed to issue.

Applicants hereby petition for a two-month extension of time to file a response and encloses \$450.00 therefor. Beyond this fee, Applicants believe no fees are due in connection with this Response. If any fees are deemed necessary, authorization is granted to charge any such fees to Deposit Account No. 13-0235.

Respectfully submitted,

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